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SUBJECT: JORDAN: NEW DOMESTIC WORKER REGULATIONS ENDORSED

REF: A. AMMAN 1424

[1](#)B. AMMAN 706

[1](#)C. AMMAN 459

[1](#)D. AMMAN 429

[1](#)E. AMMAN 242

[1](#)F. AMMAN 230

[1](#)G. 08 AMMAN 3388

[1](#)H. 08 AMMAN 3171

[1](#)I. 08 AMMAN 2822

[1](#)J. 08 AMMAN 2206

[1](#)K. 08 AMMAN 1859

[1](#)1. (U) Jordan's cabinet endorsed new regulations on August 25 aimed at protecting the rights of domestic workers, some of the workers most vulnerable to forced labor and trafficking-in-persons (TIP) in Jordan. The regulations had been under development since July 2008 when Jordan's Labor Law was amended to include agriculture and domestic workers. The regulations will become effective once published in the official gazette, which is expected within the next month according to contacts.

[1](#)2. (U) Post monitored the regulations through the entire drafting and approval process and participated in non-governmental reviews of its provisions. The Ministry of Labor (MOL) made a point to engage NGOs working with domestic workers or women's rights during the process and sought to give domestic workers the same rights as other employees consistent with the nature of their work. Provisions include:

--Ten hour work day with one day off per week.

--Fourteen days of paid annual leave and fourteen days of paid sick leave per year.

--Entitlement to contact family in their home country at least once per month at employer's expense.

--Freedom to practice their own religion.

--Worker cannot be taken out of Jordan without the worker's approval and only after notifying the worker's embassy.

--Worker must only work in their assigned home and cannot be sent to work in other people's homes.

[1](#)3. (U) In case of a complaint, the regulations authorize the Ministry of Labor to send a male and female labor inspector to the domestic worker's workplace but only after obtaining the employer's approval. The labor inspectorate can ask for a judicial warrant if employer approval is not given. If an employer is found in violation, the employer will be issued a warning and required to resolve the violation in one week. If not resolved, the employer will be subject to a range of fines and punishments, depending on the violations, as stipulated in the labor law.

[1](#)4. (U) There are also provisions in the regulations that protect the rights of employers. For instance, the domestic worker "must respect the privacy of the workplace, not reveal secrets of the house, respect the employer's traditions and

culture, and not leave the house without the employer's permission." If a domestic worker runs away, the employer is also not obligated to fulfill any financial obligations towards the workers nor will the employer have to bear the expense of sending the worker back to her country. MOL contacts stated the regulations were also designed to clearly articulate the responsibilities of both parties, which was especially important as employers often feel their rights are also not protected. (Note: Post witnessed first-hand the often negative public attitudes and behaviors towards domestic workers during recent showings of the film, Maid in Lebanon. The majority of film attendees, for instance, believed that domestic workers should not be in possession of their passports or should be given a day off. This thinking appeared to center on negative personal experiences or stories of domestic workers stealing or running away without the employer being compensated. End Comment)

15. (U) Comment: The new regulations, which were listed as first recommended action in 2009 TIP Report for Jordan, is another step forward in the fight against forced labor and TIP in Jordan. They come on the heels of the anti-TIP law that came into affect in April. Together, they represent tools that can be used to investigate and prosecute TIP and forced labor abuses. In fact, a committee, comprised of the Ministry of Labor, Recruitment Agencies Association, and Public Security Department (police), are tasked to implement the new standards. While labor inspectors, police, and judicial authorities are receiving training on TIP, the question is how effective can these regulations be enforced as domestic workers are employed in private homes, a domain where police and labor inspectors will largely not be welcome

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and where, to date, they have not gone to investigate such complaints. Nonetheless, the regulations are a step forward and Post will continue to push for enhanced investigations and increased prosecutions of TIP, especially with the solid legal tools in place. End Comment.
Beecroft